



ZONING

AN EXPLANATION OF ZONING DISTRICTS IN SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

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QUICK FACTS

THERE ARE OVER 26 ZONING DISTRICTS IN SARASOTA COUNTY.

26

THE FIRST LAND USE PLANNING LEGISLATION IN FLORIDA WAS ENACTED IN 1928 CALLED THE ZONING ENABLING ACT.

1928

SARASOTA COUNTY ADOPTED ITS FIRST ZONING ORDINANCE IN 1960.

1960

DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU COULD FIND YOUR ZONING DISTRICT ON A GIS MAP? FIND OUT MORE HERE

[HTTPS://AGS2.SCGOV.NET/SCPAPARCELS/](https://ags2.scgov.net/SCPAPARCELS/)

FOR INQUIRIES ON ZONING DISTRICTS AND THEIR STANDARDS, EMAIL: ZONING@SCGOV.NET OR, CALL 941-861-5000.

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A CUTSHEET? LET US KNOW! EMAIL: PLANNER@SCGOV.NET

WHAT IS ZONING?

Zoning's fundamental purpose is to protect a community's health, safety and welfare. It is a system of land use regulations that classify how land can be used and prescribes standards for its development by helping to protect public and private interests, preserve critical areas, promote orderly growth, and encourage development in keeping with community desires. These land use regulations are a set of local laws that are codified into a document known as the Zoning Ordinance, or the Zoning Code.

The Zoning Ordinance helps the county implement the Comprehensive Plan. It classifies land into zones called "districts," or "zoning districts," and specifies the type of uses and unique development standards allowed in each district. The development standards specify such things as the: height and size of buildings; density allowed; placement of buildings; amount of impervious surface allowed; amount of open space required; amount of parking; allowance for signs; and landscaping and buffering requirements.

The Zoning Ordinance consists of text and a map. The map identifies the zoning districts for each property within the unincorporated area of Sarasota County. The text describes the rules that govern the different zoning districts; describes land uses; identifies allowable and non-allowable uses; and contains the development standards. The text also includes the administrative processes that explain how the Zoning Ordinance is administered; how it is interpreted; how to change zoning districts; and how to request variances.

"ZONING'S FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT A COMMUNITY'S HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE."

KNOW YOUR ZONE; WHY IT MATTERS

Zoning Districts classify lots and parcels into categories. The most frequently-used Districts are; commercial, industrial, and residential. Within each of these are more specific divisions. For example, a residential zone might be segregated into separate zones for single-family homes or townhouses. Letters of the alphabet are used as code abbreviations to identify the use allowed in a physical area, such as R for residential, C for Commercial, or P for Planned Development Districts. A list of the most common districts and code abbreviations for Sarasota County can be found in the chart below.

ABBREVIATION		ZONING DISTRICT
RE-1,2,3	RESIDENTIAL	Residential Estate
RSF-1,2,3,4		Residential Single-Family
RMF-1,2,3		Residential Multifamily
RMH		Residential Manufactured Home
CN	COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL	Commercial Neighborhood
OPI		Office, Professional and Institutional
CG		Commercial General
CI		Commercial Intensive
CHI		Commercial Highway Interchange
CM		Commercial Marine
IR		Industrial and Research
ILW	PLANNED DEVELOPMENT	Industrial, Light Manufacturing and Warehousing
PED		Planned Economic Development
PUD		Planned Unit Development Overlay
OPI/PD		Office, Professional and Institutional/Planned Development
PCD		Planned Commerce Development
CM/PD	SPECIAL DISTRICT	Commercial Marine/Planned Development
PMI		Planned Mixed-Use Infill
GU		Government Use
MP		Marine Park
HPIOD		Historic Preservation Incentive Overlay District
CTOD		Commercial Transition Overlay District
MSOD		Main Street Overlay District
SKOD		Siesta Key Overlay District
MRPZ	SPECIAL PURPOSE OVERLAY	Myakka River Protection Zone
CS		Conservation Subdivision

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** AND **ZONING ORDINANCE**

It is very important to note the important distinction between a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that establishes the community's vision, goals and objectives. The Zoning Ordinance is the legally binding regulatory tool that helps to make the Comprehensive Plan a reality.

WHAT DOES THE ZONING ORDINANCE REGULATE?

The Zoning Ordinance specifies the areas in which residential, industrial, recreational or commercial activities may take place. For example, the RSF-1 (Residential Single-Family) residential zoning district allows single-family detached homes as opposed to apartment complexes or hotels. The CN (Commercial-Neighborhood) zoning district permits only certain types of neighborhood scale commercial uses such as convenience stores or small cafés, but not large-scale commercial grocery stores or fast-food restaurants.

The Zoning Ordinance also regulates the dimensional requirements for lots and for buildings on property located within the county; the density of development; types of signs that are allowed; and whether you can keep certain types of animals on your property. In addition, zoning also regulates building setbacks, height and FAR (floor-to-area ratio).

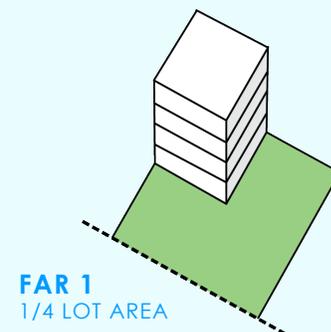
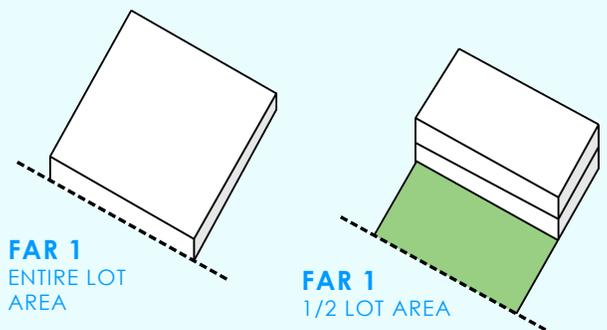
“ZONING REGULATIONS CONSISTS OF THREE PARTS: ZONING ORDINANCE, ZONING MAPS AND ADOPTED REZONES OR SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS.”

WHAT IS FLOOR AREA RATIO?

Floor Area Ratio (FAR), is a term for the ratio of a building's total floor area (Gross Floor Area) to the size of the land upon which it is built. The floor area ratio is used in zoning to limit the amount of construction in a certain area.

For example, if the zoning ordinance permits construction on a parcel at a 1.0 FAR, then the total area of all floors in all buildings constructed on the parcel must be no more than the area of the parcel itself. As a formula:

$$\text{FLOOR AREA RATIO} = \frac{\text{GROSS FLOOR AREA}}{\text{AREA OF LOT}}$$



WHO CONTROLS ZONING?

Zoning is one of the tools that are utilized to implement the County’s Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Sarasota County Commission on requested changes to the zoning ordinance. The commission decides whether to approve or deny those changes.

IS ZONING PERMANENT?

No, both the map and text of the zoning ordinance can be changed. Changes are referred to as text amendments or a rezoning when changing the zoning map. Zoning regulations exceptions can be made through the Rezone/Special Exceptions process. An explanation of this process can be found in the graphic below. For more information on changing Zoning Designations, please visit <https://www.scgov.net/DevelopmentServices/Pages/Zoning.aspx>

THE REZONES AND SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS PROCESS

1 PRELIMINARY MEETING PRE-APPLICATION MEETING

Preliminary meetings are available by appointment to consult with a planner about your project. A pre-application meeting is required with the Development Review Committee (DRC). Written summary letter provided within 7-10 days. There is a \$350 fee.

2 NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOP

A neighborhood workshop is required with surrounding property owners. A county planner will attend this meeting to explain the process. There is a \$215 fee.

3 STAFF REVIEW APPLICATION SUBMITTAL | SUFFICIENCY REVIEW FORMAL REVIEW | SCHEDULE HEARING

Application submittals are by appointment. There is a \$7,500 escrow deposit required. Staff review involves a ten (10) day sufficiency and a five (5) day formal review. Staff and Applicant schedule a Planning Commission hearing date.

4 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice is both for Planning Commission and County Commission public hearings, by newspaper advertisement, signs posted on the property and a mailed notice of public hearings.

5 PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING + RECOMMENDATION

Planning Commission hearing is held and a recommendation is made to the Board of County Commissioners. All information that is submitted either before or at the Planning Commission hearing is included in the information that is forwarded to the County Commissioners for their consideration.

6 COUNTY COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING + FINAL ACTION

The County Commission makes the final decision at the County Commission public hearing. The Process takes approximately 3-5 months.

PREPARED BY
SARASOTA COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
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